

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 7029
By Cooper B

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks
on the occasion of the Central Library in the
Memphis Public Library system being named in
his honor.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should specially recognize those estimable public servants who have committed their energy and intellectual resources to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, one such man is Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks, a leader whose courage and wisdom have served to positively shape the tenor of his times; and

WHEREAS, to publicly recognize his lifetime of estimable public service, the Memphis Public Library system named its Central Library in honor of native son, Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks, on October 27, 2005; and

WHEREAS, Benjamin Lawson Hooks was born in Memphis, Tennessee, on January 31, 1925; he received his undergraduate degree from LeMoyne College in Memphis, and he earned his J.D. degree from DePaul University Law School in 1948; and

WHEREAS, returning to Tennessee, Dr. Hooks worked as a lawyer in Memphis before being ordained as a Baptist minister in 1956; and

WHEREAS, after establishing his own law firm, Dr. Hooks fought to break down segregation, and in 1965, he became the first African American criminal court judge in Tennessee since Reconstruction; and

WHEREAS, in 1972, Dr. Benjamin Hooks became the first African American member of the Federal Communications Commission; during his tenure, the FCC worked to diminish employment discrimination and to increase minority ownership of television and radio stations; and

WHEREAS, in 1977, Dr. Hooks was named Executive Director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), a post he held until 1993; he is recognized for elevating the NAACP's position on such issues as the environment, national health, and the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, for his outstanding achievements, Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks was awarded the Spingarn Medal in 1986, the NAACP's highest honor; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Hooks also served for ten years as the Chairman of the Leadership Council on Civil Rights and is currently a Distinguished Professor of Political Science and History at the University of Memphis, where he provides active guidance to the Hooks Institute, a public policy research center working to advance the understanding of the legacy of the American civil rights movement; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Benjamin Hooks also serves as Chairman of the Tennessee Human Rights Commission, as President of the National Civil Rights Museum, and as special advisor to the NAACP on voting rights issues; and

WHEREAS, a truly spiritual man, Dr. Hooks is the longtime pastor of Greater Middle Baptist Church in Memphis, where he shares his deep and abiding faith with the membership of his loyal congregation; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Benjamin Hooks enjoys the love and companionship of his beloved wife, Frances Dancy Hooks; their devoted daughter, Patricia; and two treasured grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, in a ceremony held at the Benjamin L. Hooks Central Library in his honor, Dr. Hooks noted that his grandmother had been ejected from the Cossitt Library in the early twentieth century for attempting to check out a book, and that his niece, along with other students, had been arrested and jailed in the 1960s for attempting to use the library at Peabody and Main; additionally, Dr. Hooks remarked that it was, therefore, a great honor for a library to be named for an African American, something he never would have thought possible; and

WHEREAS, it is especially appropriate for this General Assembly to honor a man who truly epitomizes the very definition of the words dignity, determination, and faith; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE

CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and congratulate Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks on the occasion of the Central Library in the Memphis Public Library system being named in his honor and extend to him our best wishes for much continued success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we thank Dr. Benjamin Hooks for living the examined life with courage, commitment, and devotion to improving the lives of all the citizens of this great Nation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.